



# South Carolina River News



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## Two New Scenic Rivers Designated

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Scenic Rivers Program has been very busy since the last issue of *River News* was distributed. Within an eleven month period in 2001 and 2002, portions of two rivers became State Scenic Rivers. A 75-mile segment of the Black River (from Midway Bridge in Clarendon County to Pea House Landing in Georgetown County) received designation in June 2001. Then in April 2002, a 70-mile segment of the Great Pee Dee River (from the US 378 Bridge between Florence and Marion Counties and the US 17 Bridge in Georgetown) was designated as a *South Carolina State Scenic River*.

### The Newest State Scenic River: The Great Pee Dee

by Rich Scharf, Great Pee Dee Scenic River Project Manager, SCDNR

On April 22, 2002, Governor Hodges signed a bill placing a segment of the Great Pee Dee River in our Scenic Rivers Program. This segment, running from the US 378 Bridge between Florence and Marion Counties and the US 17 Bridge in Georgetown, is the eighth State Scenic River to be designated in South Carolina.

While the Great Pee Dee can accurately be described as the life's blood of the Pee Dee region, it has largely been overlooked by outdoor recreation enthusiasts of all types, except for those living within close proximity of the river. Anyone who has paddled or motored through this 70-mile ribbon of brownwater or simply sat on its banks, can vouch for its rich beauty.

Most of the land bordering the Scenic Great Pee Dee River is floodplain forest. Aside from the US 701 Bridge and one railroad bridge, the entire stretch is broken only by logging and farm roads. The corridor

is a swath of high quality wildlife habitat, boasting 120 species of fish, at least 25 rare plant species, several endangered and threatened animal species (including the American alligator, red-cockaded woodpecker, bald eagle and swallow-tailed kite), 17 species of duck (all but the wood duck are migratory visitors), a number of wading birds and fur bearing species, and typical South Carolina game species, such as white-tailed deer and turkey.

River travelers will notice a distinct change in the Great Pee Dee's character as they wend their way from the US 378 Bridge to Winyah Bay. Bald cypress/tupelo gum and bottomland hardwood forests with hairpin meanders, sandy point bars and many interconnected oxbow lakes surround the upper portions. Abandoned channels of the river, often called "lakes"

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### Mayor Proud of Scenic River Designation

by James W. Kirby, Mayor, Town of Kingstree



*The Scenic Black River*

I just returned from Greenville where the summer SC Municipal Association Conference was held. As Mayor of Kingstree, SC, I have looked to this premiere city for its successes in downtown development. But I never thought we had many common threads until I saw the Reedy River in its full, flowing glory running through the western end of Greenville's historic downtown.

It reminded me of the Black River, which runs through Kingstree, and all of the river's glory that our citizens and visitors alike have enjoyed since the early 1700s. That tradition lives on today, especially in light of Black River's newest, bestowed designation as a "scenic river."

We are proud to have our portion of the Black River designated by the SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR). Our town council agrees with protecting the river's unique, and outstanding resources, which is exactly what will happen through a voluntary management program involving river landowners and SCDNR. They will work hand in hand to accomplish common river-conservation goals.

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*A view of the upper portion of the new Scenic Great Pee Dee River*

## Field Trip The Scenic Black River

by Dr. Louis A. Drucker

Have you ever needed to just get away from the everyday routine? To find a place that's beautiful, private, serene, and therapeutic? Well, the Black River in Williamsburg County is a place that has it all. Opportunities for paddling the river abound. There are places on the river that require a great deal of technical paddling expertise. Of course, there are many areas on the Black River that offer a relaxing, easy paddling experience. If wildlife is what you desire, kingfishers,

prothonotary warblers, wood ducks, great blue herons, deer, otters, and turtles are waiting for you. The flora of the river is always changing with the blooms of the spider lilies and the trumpet vines. The canopy of cypress, oak, birch and pine forms a natural corridor that shades you from the harsh Carolina sun and protects you from the chilling winter breezes.

One of my favorite one-day canoe trips is the section in Williamsburg County starting at county Highway 35 bridge

(Seven Bridges Road), which connects Highway 261 and Highway 527 west of Kingstree, and ends at Gilland Park (at the



*Paddling on the Black River*

end of Singleton Avenue) in Kingstree. The starting point offers a dirt ramp with parking for 4 to 5 vehicles. The ending point is a nice park in the Kingstree city limits with a paved ramp, bathroom and sandy beach area. Overnight camping is only allowed with previous permission from town hall. This stretch of river has many tight areas to challenge your paddling skills, yet not enough to keep you from enjoying the esthetic beauty surrounding you. There are a few cabins and private landings, but the sounds and

sights of nature will predominate your trip. The "average" paddling time will be seven hours with adequate water level and rest stops. The water level should always be checked before starting. If the level in Kingstree is below three feet, some portages over fallen trees should be expected. When the water level in Kingstree is above eight feet, added bonuses to this trip are the "short cuts" through the swamps. If you like very tight areas for exploring and have the time, these "short cuts" can offer some great

memories. Depending upon the water level, there are many areas (landings and sandbars) to rest, picnic, and swim. I always recommend that there be at least one experienced paddler per boat, due to the many twists and turns of the river.

A couple of outfitters currently offer paddling trips on the Black River. With its "State Scenic" designation, more and more people are going to realize what I've known for more than thirty years: the Black River is a very special place.

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### *Great Pee Dee continued from page 1*

(e.g., Jordan Lake, Thomas Lake), have a distinct blackwater character and can be explored in small boats. But beyond the confluence with the Little Pee Dee River, sandy point bars and banks disappear. The surrounding forest becomes tidal swamp. The main forest species are still present, but some, like the swamp and black willows that dominate sandy banks upstream, vanish completely. Below Thoroughfare Creek, the freshwater tidal marshes that were once the basis for antebellum rice plantations begin to displace the tidal swamp forest.

The lands along the upper portions of the river are important productive timberlands. Further back from the river, the land is used for row crops, hay and pasture. It is clear to the observer that the vast majority of the landowners employ

sound land stewardship practices and often manage their properties for wildlife purposes, too. Landowners along the former rice growing portions of the river tend to manage their lands for wildlife and historic preservation.

The Great Pee Dee River is a playground for history buffs. The South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology identified 75 archeological sites along the scenic section of the river, dating from 8,000 years before present on into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The lower portion of the river still boasts several antebellum plantation houses that have been restored by their present owners. The rice growing area was a place of both incredible wealth and cruel hardship in the early days of the state. The river was also a key transportation route, connecting interior

areas of the Carolinas with the coast. Remnants of ferry and riverboat landings can be seen at low water in many places along the river.

Even today, after the scenic river designation, a recreational river user is likely to find solitude on the Great Pee Dee. There are only eight public landings along the entire 70-mile stretch and, due to topography, this is unlikely to change very much in the future.

For further inquiries about our newest addition to the state scenic rivers program, call Rich Scharf at (803) 734-9135 or contact him via e-mail at [scharf@dnr.state.sc.us](mailto:scharf@dnr.state.sc.us).



## River Naturalist Swallow-tailed Kite

by John Cely, Wildlife Biologist, SCDNR

South Carolina's blackwater rivers are some of the state's most valuable and unique natural treasures. The Black, Edisto, Little Pee Dee, Waccamaw and others have a luxurious and subtropical beauty found in few other locales. Therefore, it is fitting that the black rivers of the Carolina Low Country host one of the world's classiest birds: the Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*). One's first sight of this magnificent raptor gliding low over a riverfront cypress forest is not soon forgotten. The striking plumage, jet-black wings and tail with a white head and body, four-foot wingspan and long forked tail, set this bird off from any other. Its incredible lift-to-weight-ratio allows the Swallow-tail to glide and soar effortlessly for long periods without flapping its wings, which has led to some naturalists dubbing it "nature's hang glider."

South Carolina, with an estimated 120 breeding pairs of Swallow-tailed Kites, has the world's northern-most nesting population. The majority of the 1,200 pairs thought to occur in the United States are found in Florida,

with smaller numbers found along the large coastal rivers of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Because of its low numbers and susceptibility to population declines, the Swallow-tailed Kite was listed as a state endangered species by the SCDNR in 1976.

Swallow-tailed Kites arrive in South Carolina in mid- to late March and nest building commences in April. The nest, constructed of Spanish moss and twigs, is located near the very top of a tall cypress, tupelo, or loblolly pine. A normal clutch consists of two eggs. After hatching, the young kites develop rapidly on a diet of insects, anoles, green snakes, small frogs and other such food. Kites depart for their Brazilian wintering grounds, which were not discovered until 1996, in late August.

Swallow-tailed Kites are indelibly linked to the winding rivers and swamp forests of coastal South Carolina. These wetlands provide them food and cover, nesting and roosting sites. On a lucky day you may even see this spectacular bird skimming along the river surface for a drink of water.



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*"One's first sight of this magnificent raptor gliding low over a riverfront cypress forest is not soon forgotten."*

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## River Conservation Continues Despite Budget Cuts

by Barry Beasley, Land and Water Stewardship Program Manager, SCDNR

Like all state funded programs, DNR's Land and Water Stewardship Program must continue to meet our obligations to the citizens of South Carolina with less money and fewer staff. This situation has led to some changes in our priorities and reductions in some of our activities. We are faced with the challenge of meeting our responsibilities with fewer resources.

The Land and Water Stewardship Program (which includes the Scenic Rivers Program) currently has five full-time staff, down from a staff of nine in August 2001. All vacant positions in the DNR are frozen; we cannot replace lost personnel. As a result, we have cut our popular Adopt-a-Landing Program, reduced our education and outreach activities and made significant cutbacks in technical assistance with natural resource planning activities throughout the state. As you are aware, we are unable to print and distribute our newsletter, *SC River News*.

We are essentially working to maintain our program at the moment. Our potential for undertaking new projects must be weighed against our ability to meet current responsibilities.

So, what is the good news?

The Land and Water Stewardship Program staff is committed to the continued sound management of South Carolina's rivers and our natural resources. While our monetary resources are minimal, the staff is searching for ways to "do more with less" and get better while we, unfortunately, get smaller. One solution to our budget woes is right in front of you: *SC River News* is now a web-based publication! Our program is assisted by the hard work of the scenic river advisory councils, which are active in the management of South Carolina's scenic rivers. Despite budget cuts and staff reductions, we have managed to designate two additional scenic rivers in the past year and are about to create a new advisory council on the Great Pee Dee, our newest scenic river.

We are also investigating ways to raise outside funds to help support our efforts in river conservation. We are trying to make more people aware of the existence of the South Carolina Scenic Rivers Trust Fund, which was developed to aide in protecting rivers within the state. All monies from the fund are used to support conservation and are not used for salaries or other administrative costs. If you would like to help in our conservation efforts, you can make a tax-deductible contribution to the South Carolina Scenic Rivers Trust Fund; contact Barry Beasley at (803) 743-9095 for more information.

There does not seem to be an immediate end in sight to the state's budget problems. However, with the help of partnerships with corporations and environmental groups, outreach efforts, and our volunteer base, which includes our scenic river advisory councils, The Land and Water Stewardship Program will continue to move forward with a positive outlook.



When I explain this voluntary management program to river landowners who have inquired about the designation, I'm met with the same perplexed look as the Mayor of Greenville when he tells people the city will demolish the bridge that crosses Reedy River. "You're going to do what?" is their first reaction. Mayor White and I both know that citizens sometimes look at government as an enforcement and mandating authority. That's definitely not so in these cases.

The scenic river designation allows government and citizens to work together to successfully protect all the things that make the Black River a bountiful, natural wonder. The designation will protect your land, while it protects the redbreast, bass, and catfish swimming in its dark waters. It will also ensure the longevity of the beautiful live oaks and cypress knees along its white, sandy banks. In addition, com-


mon sightings of deer, alligators, otters and turtles will remain natural occurrences in the river's narrows and lakes.

In my point of view, the designation will assist our community on planning for the river's future. Eco-tourism is becoming attractive to South Carolina visitors. The Towns of Kingstree, Andrews, and Georgetown are going to want your feedback on how to manage this growing industry. Already, the fun-loving conservationists, such as canoers, kayakers and campers are seeking out Gilland Park, a public park in Kingstree situated along

***"What a grand opportunity this is to manage our river's resources with citizens who care about our community's character and natural beauty."***

the Black River with an accessible boat landing. I find them a breed of respectful visitors who will join us in taking care of our river, keeping it litter-free. Landowners will also have a say in our attempts to keep the river navigable after storms and other natural disasters.

I am proud of this designation. And while I'll keep looking to Greenville, and other larger municipalities for development, there will always be a smile on my face regarding the Black River in Kingstree. It is leadership at the local and state levels, which will make me smile even wider. Their vision has led us to this designation. What a grand opportunity this is to manage our river's resources with citizens who care about our community's character and natural beauty. Who knew government could be so much fun!

Now that's a public-private partnership working for all of us. 

*This article was written in late summer, 2001.*



## River Updates

What's been happening on the Scenic River near you? With the interruption in production of River News, many of you may not know about all the activities on State Scenic Rivers and other river management projects. Here are some of the things we've been working on over the last year...

### Ashley Scenic River

The Ashley Scenic River Management Plan (final draft) is completed. Over the last two years, the Ashley Scenic River Advisory Council, in partnership with the SCDNR, conducted an open public-planning process to create the plan. It specifies management goals and recommendations that address (1) water quality improvement; (2) recreational use and access; (3) preservation and conservation of natural, scenic and cultural resources; and (4) land management and appropriate development. The plan will serve as a guide for ongoing activities of the advisory council to conserve and enhance the Ashley Scenic River. Currently, funds are being sought to publish the plan.

### Broad Scenic River

The Scenic Broad River Advisory Council has been busy updating the 1993 *Scenic Broad River Management Plan*, which is currently out of print. This updated plan will specify management goals and recommendations that address (1) water quality improvement; (2) recreational use and access; (3) preservation and conservation of natural, scenic and cultural resources; and (4) land management, law enforcement and stewardship education. This plan will guide the advisory council as it conserves and enhances the Broad Scenic River. Currently, the plan is in the draft stage. When complete, it will be posted on the SCDNR website.

### Edisto River Project

The First Annual Friends of the Edisto Stewardship Day was initiated to clean up trash on the Edisto River, access points on the river and along the highways in the river basin. The April 2002 event involved nearly 1,000 people in eight counties and was supported by a grant from Palmetto Pride. Be on the lookout for Stewardship Day 2003.

The North Fork Blueway opened just last year. This 32-mile river trail on the North Fork of the Edisto was created through a partnership that included Friends of the Edisto (FRED), Palmetto Conservation Foundation, Orangeburg County and the local Ducks Unlimited chapter. The trail begins at the SC Highway 3 bridge and ends at the Glover Street landing in Orangeburg. A map can be found at [www.edistofriends.org/active.htm](http://www.edistofriends.org/active.htm).

Nearly 6,000 acres have been added to Francis Beidler Forest (an Audubon preserve in Four Hole Swamp) through the environmental regulatory process of wetland mitigation. Beidler Forest is a state approved "mitigation bank" where wetland acres are purchased for preservation by developers as a way to mitigate for wetland losses caused by construction and development projects. Norman Brunswig, Audubon Sanctuary Manager, credits the information and ideas of the Edisto River Basin Project as the catalyst that led to creation of the mitigation bank at Beidler Forest.

### Lynches Scenic River

In August 2001, SCDNR was awarded a grant by SCDHEC for the Lynches Scenic River Project to address nonpoint source pollution issues within the scenic segment. There are four components to the grant: (1) investigate and map the riparian zone within the 54-mile scenic stretch; (2) develop and initiate an outreach program to inform landowners about the importance of protecting riparian zones; (3) develop and conduct a week-long watershed educational program for children; and (4) develop a model boat landing at the Rt. 15 bridge near Bishopville. Work began on the grant last fall. The riparian zone investigation began last spring and will continue into this fall.



*4H<sub>2</sub>O Lynches River Adventure canoe trip*

The first 4H<sub>2</sub>O Lynches River Adventure Program was conducted at Lee State Natural Area near Bishopville on July 15-19. This program was developed as part of the grant discussed above. The week-long program allowed 24 kids to learn about the types of activities that affect a watershed, plants and animals that live there, the history of the area and how to canoe. They spent time splashing in the river so learning was actually fun! This program is expected to become an annual event in the watershed.

## 2002 is the Year of Clean Water

This year, the Clean Water Act celebrates its 30th anniversary. Therefore, 2002 has been declared the Year of Clean Water. To celebrate the Clean Water Act, SCDHEC, SCDNR, SCPRT, SC Forestry Commission, Clemson University Extension Service, the SC Association of Conservation Districts, the US Geological Survey and Saluda Shoals Park are encouraging South Carolinians to participate in National Water Monitoring Day on October 18.

This event, to be held on the actual anniversary of the enactment of the Clean Water Act, provides an excellent opportunity for enhancing public appreciation for the importance of our water resources, educating the public about water quality issues and providing a snapshot of water quality 30 years after the passage of the Clean Water Act.

Participants will be collecting water quality data from their local waterbody which can be entered on a national website where monitoring data from around the country can be viewed.

For more information, go to [www.scdhec.net/cleanwater/](http://www.scdhec.net/cleanwater/).

*"The Year of Clean Water and National Monitoring Day activities provide a wonderful opportunity to promote water resource stewardship."*

*Barry Beasley, SCDNR*



## South Carolina River News

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## River Currents

The 2002 Edisto River Basin Celebration/Annual Meeting of Friends of the Edisto (FRED) will be held on Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am to 4:00pm at the Orangeburg Arts Center. Information about this and other FRED activities can be found at [www.edistofriends.org](http://www.edistofriends.org). FRED is a private non-profit organization formed by members of the Edisto River Basin Task Force to advocate the goals of the *Edisto River Basin Project Report* (published by SCDNR in 1996).

**Protecting Rivers and Streams: What Can I Do?** A presentation offered by the SCDNR River Conservation Program staff can inform your group about the problems of pollution and habitat degradation in our rivers and streams. Personal choices that we all make can have positive or negative effects on rivers and streams in our communities. Our staff will talk about what individuals can do to address these problems. Contact **Bill Marshall** at (803) 734-9096 if you have interest in scheduling this SCDNR presentation for a future meeting of your group or club.

**Do YOU know** of any river-related news or upcoming events? If so, send a short description to **Lynn Quattro** at [quattro@scdnr.state.sc.us](mailto:quattro@scdnr.state.sc.us) for inclusion in River Currents or call and give the scoop at (803) 734-9094.

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*River Updates continued from page 5*

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The Lynches River Festival was held on May 18 this year and, despite torrential rain, was a success. About 600 folks braved the storm to hear presentations from the SC Center for Birds of Prey, the Butterfly Pavilion and Rudy Mancke, to name a few. The next festival will be on Saturday, May 17, 2003...keep watching for more information and make plans now to attend.

### Saluda Scenic River

An upgrade of dissolved oxygen standards in the lower Saluda River is proposed by SCDHEC. This action follows requests of the Lower Saluda Scenic River Advisory Council and several other groups made in January. The lower Saluda is classified in state regulation as Trout Waters, yet the river has a "site specific" standard that sets no minimum level for dissolved oxygen,

*The Reedy River Paddling Guide* is now available from SCDNR. This guide was developed during the watershed planning process for the Reedy River that was completed last year. The Pinnacle Consulting Group, Inc. developed the guide in conjunction with a new website about the Reedy River. The guide contains maps and important paddling information for twelve stretches of the Reedy River. The paddling guide is free; to get a copy, contact **Lynn Quattro** of SCDNR at (803) 734-9094 or [quattro@dnr.state.sc.us](mailto:quattro@dnr.state.sc.us). Please visit the Reedy River website (which also contains information for paddling the Reedy River) at [www.paddlesc.net](http://www.paddlesc.net).

**Saluda Shoals Park-Phase II** is open to the public with additions that include the environmental educational center; a large meeting and conference building called the River Center; and trail access to most of the 250 acre site that runs along the Saluda River. For details, go to their web site at [www.Saludashoals.com](http://www.Saludashoals.com) or call (803) 731-5208.

**The Twelfth Annual Beach Sweep/River Sweep** is scheduled for Saturday, September 21, 2002. The sweep is a one-day clean up of the state's waterways co-sponsored by the SCDNR and SC Sea Grant Consortium. For more information or to volunteer, call **Bobbie Adams** at (803) 734-9108.

only a **daily average** of 5mg/l. SCDHEC is now seeking to establish the regular dissolved oxygen standard, which requires "not less than 6 mg/l." More information can be obtained from **Gina Kirkland** with SCDHEC at (803) 898-4250.

**Lower Saluda Service-Project Opportunity:** You and your group can help protect streams and clean water, increase awareness of how polluted runoff impacts the Saluda River and provide residents with suggestions on how to reduce the pollution. All this can be accomplished if you help do the following: (1) **Tag storm drains** with a "Dump No Waste! Drains to Saluda River" sign (tag); and (2) **Distribute information** (door hangers) to inform the community of ways they can protect streams and clean water. If interested, contact **Bill Marshall** with SCDNR at (803) 734-9096 or by email at [marshall@dnr.state.sc.us](mailto:marshall@dnr.state.sc.us).

**The Catawba River Task Force Implementation Committee** is hosting a Catawba River Conference on October 30 at the Baxter Hood Center at York Tech in Rock Hill, South Carolina. The focus of the conference is to review the work of the committee over the past 10 years since the completion of the South Carolina Catawba River Corridor Study and to set goals for the next ten years. For more information, call **Paul Gettys** at (803) 327-9041.

**This year has been proclaimed the Year of Clean Water** and South Carolinians are encouraged to participate in National Water Monitoring Day on October 18th. Local groups can monitor the water quality of their local streams, river, lakes and ponds and transmit their results to a national database. For more information, contact **Anne Marie Johnson** of SCDHEC at (803) 898-4187 or go to [www.scdhec.net/cleanwater/](http://www.scdhec.net/cleanwater/).

**Barry Beasley (DNR Section Manager)** was recently re-elected as **President of the River Management Society (RMS)**. RMS is a non-profit professional organization dedicated to the protection and sound management of North America's river resources.

